



African Forum for Media Development

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Progress Report by Jeanette Minnie – 17 November 2008

Background to the AFMD¹

The establishment of the *African Forum for Media Development (AFMD)* is linked to the earlier establishment and development of the *Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)*. The GFMD held an international conference on 1-3 October 2005 in Amman, Jordan, which was attended by 425 delegates from 97 countries. One of the goals of the conference was to establish whether consensus existed about the establishment of an international organisation to provide a collective voice for organisations involved in the development of the media. An overwhelming mandate was received at the conference to formally establish the GFMD.

It was later decided by the GFMD's founding steering committee - as proposed by the African caucus meeting of the Amman conference - to proceed with the establishment of regional forums for media development, which would collectively constitute the GFMD in the future. The future steering committee of the GFMD would also consist of two elected representatives of each regional forum, so as to provide equity in the stakeholding of the GFMD. An additional member forum of international media development NGOs would also be established, who would also elect representatives to the steering committee of the GFMD.

The African Forum is therefore part of a series of regional forums that have been established in Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) as well as in Latin America & the Caribbean. The GFMD sought to mobilise these regional networks ahead of the second international conference of the GFMD that will take place in Athens, Greece on 7-10 December 2008. The process of establishing these regional forums of the GFMD will be concluded in Athens where international media development NGOs will constitute themselves into their own forum and elect an additional four members to represent them on the GFMD's steering committee.

The AFMD Preparatory Meeting

A preparatory meeting to discuss the founding conference of the AFMD was held in Maputo, Mozambique, on 3 May 2008 immediately after UNESCO'S international World Press Freedom Day celebrations, which had been attended by a range of African media organisations². The AFMD preparatory meeting (at a separate venue in Maputo) was attended by 20 African participants, the chairperson of the African Media Initiative (AMI) and 3 representatives of the GFMD, who sacrificed UNESCO'S concluding social event to attend the 3-hour meeting. An African media training organisation, the NSJ Southern African Media Training Trust, organised the preparatory meeting at the request of Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX, one of the two African founding steering committee members of the GFMD (and the Coordinator of the AFMD conference). The NSJ arranged this meeting at no charge for its services with only its expenses covered by the GFMD. At this meeting the Director of the GFMD, Bettina Peters, and the second African GFMD steering committee member, Edetaen Ojo of Media Rights Agenda in Nigeria, presented an introduction and overview of the GFMD. All the organisations present made proposals about themes and topics to be included in the founding conference of the AFMD. The later conference programme and working group themes of the AFMD were substantively based on these proposals.

Two possible events at which the conference could take place were also proposed, including the forthcoming 13th annual Highway Africa conference of Rhodes University in South Africa, the largest media networking event on the continent, as well as the founding conference of the IFJ's Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), to be formed by all national unions and association of journalists in Africa, which would take place in either Sudan or Kenya. Towards the middle of July, however, 2 and a half months

¹ Based on the AMFD founding conference invitation drafted by Jeanette Minnie

² See separate report by E. Ojo on the preparatory meeting attached

after this meeting, it was decided by the GFMD to approve the Highway Africa conference as the venue because a firm decision had not yet been taken by unions in Africa as to where and when the FAJ event would take place. Highway Africa had also agreed to the proposal and was in a position to offer significant logistical support in the organisation of the AFMD conference. Highway Africa also proposed that the AFMD conference should take place on September 7-8, immediately prior to the opening of the Highway Africa conference. The GFMD's steering committee then also decided to hold its next meeting – the last to be held before its forthcoming second global conference in Athens and in terms of which key decisions needed to be taken – at Rhodes University one day before the AFMD conference.

Aims of the AFMD

Sub-Saharan Africa is generally characterised by a serious lack of communication and coherent linkage between media support organisations within countries, between countries and between sub-regions of the continent. It is essential to overcome this fragmentation for various reasons including:

- To limit unnecessary duplication of effort;
 - To combine synergies for stronger impact nationally, sub-regionally and at sub-Saharan level;
 - To provide a coherent and streamlined media civil society counterpart for the African Union;
 - To effectively map and provide a database of media civil society organisations and resources in sub-Saharan Africa;
 - To explore best practises; and
 - To provide an African regional platform and voice for international engagement with other regions (in the first instance through the GFMD), but also in relation to other international development organisations (governmental and non-governmental).
- A fundamental issue is the (lack of) dedicated financial resources from the international community for the development of independent media internationally, and particularly in Africa.

While efforts are underway among some media support sectors in Africa to establish sub-Saharan or pan African networks (e.g. among organisations in the media education and training sector and in the media freedom sector), it is nevertheless essential that these and other sectors of the media also engage with each other in a more holistic manner. This inter-sectoral approach is a key element of the GFMD. One of the findings of the GFMD's Amman conference was that:

“Holistic approaches to media development should be taken in all contexts, looking beyond, for instance, journalism training, at the broad set of issues - legal, regulatory, economic, political, infrastructural and technical - that influence the development of independent media”.

Delegates of the AFMD Founding Conference

The conference was attended by 63 delegates³ representing:

- 4 sub-Saharan/pan African networks including AMARC Africa, The African Editors Forum (TAEF), the Africa Division of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), the IFJ's Africa office and the Network of African Freedom of Expression Organisations (NAFEO – through the MFWA);
- 35 African media support organisations including:
 - 6 West African, 7 East African, 6 Central African and 16 Southern African organisations;
- 9 international media support organisations (GFMD, Irex, IWPR, BBC World Service Trust, Internews, Panos London, IFJ, the Panos Institute in Paris and the Rory Peck Trust);
- 2 Asian media support organisations (SEAPA, Panos South Asia);
- 5 UNDP delegates (its New York office and 4 African communications country or sub-regional representatives);
- 2 Open Society Foundations (London Media Programme / West African Media/ICT Programme); and
- the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Coordinator issued all the conference invitations after drafting a list based on her own knowledge of African media support organisations, obtaining names of more media support organisations from the Open Society Initiative in East Africa, studying the list of African organisations who had attended the GFMD's first global conference in Jordan in 2005, and after consultation with Mr Edetaen Ojo and Ms. Bettina Peters, the Director of the GFMD. Additional delegates were also proposed by the UNDP. Serious effort was made to arrive at a balance of media support organisations within different sub-sectors of media development practise. These included sub-regional forums of editors and The African Editors Forum, sub-regional unions of journalists and the Africa office of the IFJ, media freedom

³ See the appended attendance list for the names and organisations of the 63 delegates. Some delegates represented more than one organisation or network.

organisations, media education and training institutions, media and gender organisations, media monitoring organisations, independent media complaints bodies (media councils), media for development organisations (the Panos Institutes), media broadcasting associations (community radio and mainstream broadcasters) and organisations involved in financing the growth and sustainability of the media.

Six confirmed African delegates very regrettably failed to arrive for the conference for various reasons provided to the Coordinator including:

- A problematic flight booking in respect of one delegate from Liberia (the Women's Media Action Committee) by the travel agent. She travelled one leg of her journey to Lagos, but had to return home because it was impossible to make the connecting flight or to catch another connecting flight in time for the conference. A new return flight ticket also subsequently had to be purchased to assist her in returning home. Mr Edetaen Ojo (see below), who also could not make the conference, kindly provided her with accommodation at his home in Nigeria for two days, because no return flights were available any sooner;
- A delegate from the International Press Centre in Nigeria was unable to board his flight because he could not penetrate the chaos of the South African Airways checking in counter at Lagos airport despite arriving two hours before departure (the normal check in time stipulated) and subsequently lost his seat;
- Mr Edetaen Ojo, the GFMD volunteer steering committee member from Media Rights Agenda in Nigeria, could not obtain a visa from the South African High Commission in Lagos despite two attempts a number of weeks before the conference. He reported that the Commission was in a physical state of chaos in respect of public procedures to apply for visas.
- The delegate of the Southern African Journalists Association from Zimbabwe was not allowed by South African Airways to check in for his flight because his passport did not contain enough blank pages as stipulated by international visa regulations;
- the CEO of the MDDA in South Africa did not arrive because he was asked to participate in a television panel discussion in another city on the eve of the conference;
- The delegate from the West African Journalists Association did not provide any reason for her absence.

Funding and partners

Funding to the value of US\$ 65 000 was committed by donors for the conference with the UNDP pledging US\$ 40 000 (61.5% of the total) and the Open Society Media Programme in London pledging US\$ 25 000 (38.5%). Both donors subsequently agreed to enter in a basket funding arrangement so that the same financial and narrative reports could be furnished to both for a single project/event.

Fundraising took place over an extremely small window period in the last two weeks of July. Possible funding from the UNDP was tentatively agreed through the facilitation of the GFMD's Director, but the final grant was dependent on approval of the funding application. (The UNDP has also funded the founding conferences of two other GFMD regional forums). Beyond the UNDP another 3 donors were approached including the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA). OSISA forwarded the funding application to the Open Society's (international) Media Programme in London who subsequently agreed to fund the conference.

The funding obtained fell short of the budget of US\$80 000 originally envisaged, but due to pressure of time a decision had to be made by the Coordinator in early August whether the conference should go ahead. She decided to proceed despite the shortfall, because if the Highway Africa opportunity was missed, it was most unlikely that the AFMD would be established before the 2nd GFMD conference in Athens in December. Because of the funding shortfall, however, the number of African delegates originally envisaged had to be scaled down by almost 20%. It was therefore most regrettable that 6 of the delegates in the final analysis failed to arrive at the conference for various reasons.

The Coordinator had also attended the preparatory meeting in Maputo and had organised the NSJ to arrange the preparatory meeting. She also prepared the conference budget after discussion with Highway Africa, contacted donors and drafted all the funding applications, issued invitations to all delegates and remained in close contact with them for many logistical reasons.

An African partner organisation nevertheless had to be appointed to take receipt of and be accountable for the funding. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) was selected for this purpose. Jeanette Minnie is also a former Regional Director of MISA and still closely involved with MISA and some of its projects. All funding applications were submitted to donors under cover of a letter from the Regional Director of MISA, Mr Kaitira Kandjii.

MISA also made all the flight bookings of delegates for the conference, with the exception of the Open Society, UNDP, GFMD steering committee and other international observers, who were responsible for arranging and paying their own travel and accommodation costs.

The Highway Africa Conference of Rhodes University was the other major logistical partner in the organisation of this conference and was responsible for organising all airport transfers, hotel accommodation, transfers between the hotels and conference venue, meals as well as French translation at the conference.

Some of the delegates who attended the AFMD conference was subsequently also used as speakers or moderators of sessions by Highway Africa for its own conference including Diana Senghor (Panos Institute for West Africa in Senegal), Jeanette Minnie (Zambezi FoX in South Africa), Bettina Peters (GFMD) and Sadler Kamudyariwa (Southern African Media Development Fund in Botswana). More AFMD delegates had been invited as Highway Africa resource persons, but were unable to stay on for the Highway Africa conference.

Logistical challenges of the AFMD conference

Although arriving at the conference, a delegate from Somalia representing the East African Journalists Association encountered severe difficulties with the South African immigration authorities at the O. R. Tambo international airport in Johannesburg on arrival in the country. Despite having a passport and other necessary papers approved only days before by the British Embassy in Kenya, he was nearly turned back by the South African immigration authorities. It required the telephonic and written intervention of the Coordinator co-signed by Mr William Orme of the UNDP and the General Secretary of the IFJ to help secure his entry. In addition the British Embassy in Kenya was phoned by the South African immigration authorities to recheck the authenticity of his travel papers and British passport. Having lost his South African connecting flight due to this delay, this delegate eventually arrived at the conference in time for the opening session having at his own initiative taken an overnight bus from Johannesburg to Grahamstown (a 12-hour road journey). The conference coordinator in particular thanked him for his resilience and determination during the welcoming session of the conference.

One delegate also experienced difficulties with his flight ticket in respect of a connecting flight on his return journey, and was forced to buy a new ticket to connect from Nigeria to Sierra Leone. This meant that he had to be reimbursed for this ticket. A number of delegates also had to be accommodated overnight in Johannesburg on their return journey in order to link up with their connecting flights the next morning. (MISA arranged these accommodation bookings in advance). Another two delegates also needed to be assisted with overnight assistance at other airports to link up with connecting flights the next morning during their return journeys. In these cases they were asked to arrange their own hotel accommodation and were provided with per diem assistance to cover these costs.

The Coordinator reported some of these problems during the opening session of the AFMD conference, but further remarked that four delegates from West Africa could not obtain visas for South Africa in their own countries, since South Africa did not have any consular presence in these countries. South Africa as a matter of policy refuses to facilitate the issuing of visas at any of its ports of entry, and visas must strictly be acquired beforehand. These delegates had to send their passports by courier to Ghana where the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) submitted and obtained their visas, and couriered these back to them. Given the extremely short period of time during which this conference was organised, it was largely a miracle that this time consuming arrangement succeeded. This required much additional effort by the Coordinator who also had to provide guarantees of refunds to the MFWA in respect of some of these visa fees. The MFWA also had to make special interventions with the South African High Commission in Ghana to obtain these visas. The MFWA was particularly thanked for this effort in supporting colleagues from other media support organisations in Africa.

Given these significant logistical difficulties, including the enormous cost of long distance flight tickets in Africa, the Coordinator recommended that future meetings of the AFMD not take place in South Africa, but in an African country much more centrally located, such as Kenya, who was also an international air travel hub in Africa. The flight tickets would be much cheaper because of the shorter flight routes of delegates and the Kenyan government would be willing (as all other African governments are with the single exception of South Africa) to make special arrangements for visas to be issued at the airport on arrival. South Africa was also increasingly earning a reputation as a xenophobic country. (The Coordinator herself is a South African, but not blind to its problems and frequently attends meetings and conferences elsewhere in Africa with a minimum of visa effort and trouble).

A number of delegates at the conference were also from Francophone countries and a few of these did not speak any or sufficient English to follow numerous messages in relation to logistical conference matters. In these cases Mr. Gabriel Baglo, the Africa Director of the IFJ in Senegal, at the request of the Coordinator, translated email messages into French or telephoned delegates to communicate messages to them. The Coordinator also made numerous phone calls across sub-Saharan Africa to chase up delegates

for responses, to confirm their flight bookings, to confirm their participation as speakers and about other programmatic or logistical matters. Given that the bulk of the invitations were only issued on August 5 for a conference which was to take place barely over a month later, and within the context of the particular difficulties experienced in Africa, communication by phone was essential. The Coordinator has therefore lodged an invoice for communication costs with MISA in respect of the conference budget.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) was tasked with making the air flight bookings of all delegates from its Regional Secretariat in Namibia, using their own travel agent. Ms. Bernadette Cloete of MISA made these flight bookings during the same time that she and MISA were organising its regional Annual General Meeting for 11 national country chapters of Southern Africa – a major cross-border event on MISA's annual calendar. Ms. Cloete was under enormous pressure during this time and made a sterling effort. The Coordinator and Ms. Cloete were virtually in daily contact during this month via Internet Skype between South Africa and Namibia.

MISA also provided further services to the AFMD including:

- Noting and writing the conference minutes;
- Registering and making financial disbursements to delegates during the conference;
- Disbursing post-conference payments and preparing the financial report; and
- Creating an AFMD page on MISA's website.

On the whole Highway Africa, as the other major logistical partner of the conference, did a good job of arranging all their services, but a few problems did arise, including around translation. The live French translation service was almost cancelled on the first day because Highway Africa had double booked the facility. As a consequence the technical and electronic support for this service had not been installed the day before, which resulted in a 2-hour delay to the start of the conference. On the second day, now minus electronic communication and earphones, the French delegates had to sit in a group so that the French translator could translate for them sitting in their midst.

The cost of flight tickets also escalated once these bookings were being made. Original flight cost estimates for the budget had been arrived at by the Coordinator after conducting careful internet searches of flight costs to the major capitals and other cities of the 4 sub-regions in sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, these costs increased considerably when bookings were finally made. Flight costs in Africa are also exceptionally high when compared to Europe.

It should be emphasised as highlighted in this report that it takes unusual and serious effort to organise cross-border conference in Africa. Travel and communication impediments within and between countries are a major factor. Another major impediment is the severe lack of financial resources experienced by media support organisations, who with isolated exceptions cannot attend conferences if their participation is not fully funded. It is therefore not feasible to expect most of these organisations to attend such conferences or events at their own cost. The Coordinator recommended during the conference that member organisations of the AFMD in future budget for their attendance at AFMD events and include these budgets in their funding applications to donors.

The AFMD conference

The programme⁴ of the conference as well as the themes discussed by the working groups were based on proposals made at the earlier preparatory meeting in Maputo and later suggestions received from the UNDP. Ten sessions took place organised under the following themes:

Opening Session: Why we need the GFMD

Session One: Mapping and concepts of media development in Africa

Session Two: Intergovernmental and civil society partnerships/mechanisms to strengthen media freedom and access to information in Africa

Session Three: Media development in conflict and post conflict zones

Session Four: Building regional networks within the GFMD

Session Five: Prospects and challenges for independent, non-partisan public and community broadcasters in Africa

Session Six: Professional and ethical standards of journalism – the case for voluntary self-regulation of the media in Africa

Session Seven: New media and its effects on journalism and media development, including Citizen Journalism

Session Eight: Election of two African representatives to the GFMD's Steering Committee.

⁴ See conference programme attached

Session Nine: Media funding and sustainability in Africa

Closure: Cocktail reception to celebrate the launch of the AFMD

A report of the formal proceedings of the conference prepared by Zoe Titus of MISA is attached. Unfortunately not all presenters submitted written papers (as they had been requested to do), and a number of papers have therefore not been captured or reflected in the minutes of the conference or on the web page.

Session one was an important session of the conference as it presented African, Asian and international models of mapping media landscapes in countries, as well as the international media development law, regulation and policy indicators of UNESCO and the IPDC. Mention was also made of an important new media development initiative beginning to take shape in sub-Saharan Africa, known as the African Media Initiative (AMI). An interesting tool for monitoring and evaluation of media development work was presented by Panos South Asia. The methodology measures and recognises that media is a distinctive catalyst in the overall development paradigm in its own right - quite separately from the state, executive and civil society organisations. These and other methodologies are of great value to the aims of the GFMD and AFMD, because it has become increasingly important to analyse and demonstrate the role of the media on the basis of social-scientific evidence. These studies and models are crucial to proving the case for substantial investment in media development. At the same time media support organisations need to plan and implement their work much more professionally on the basis of such studies and research, along with credible evaluation systems to ensure that their work is meaningful and relevant and can be shown to be such.

During session two a delegate named the countries which could or should be regarded as part of the Central African sub-region – an important contribution and the subject of ongoing debate. He also named a number of African media support organisations who worked in this sub-region. Overall he pleaded for the development of a coherent regional strategy for Central Africa, which would then need the support and resources of development agencies and international partners. Central Africa is largely regarded as a severely neglected and conflict-torn region of Africa and the preparatory meeting had specifically requested a focus on Central Africa. A delegate from the DRC emphasised the importance of peace journalism and consistent content monitoring of the media in this country, to track and combat reporting that could lead to more conflict and violence. Media professionals also needed to be made aware of professional journalism ethics in general as well as codes of practise on election coverage.

A strong reminder was also issued by a delegate of the IFJ of the dozens of journalists imprisoned in Africa and the hundreds who live in exile. Continuous effort was needed to release African journalists from prison and ongoing support and work in relation to the safety of journalists (including safe houses and strategies) were vitally needed. He pleaded that investment in media development needed to be accompanied by investment in the building of strong unions of journalists to undertake the safety work necessary and to help develop the sustainability of the media through the creation of stable working conditions and ethical journalism practise. The importance of networking between unions and other media support organisations were also emphasised.

A paper on Zimbabwe emphasised the serious consequences of hate speech carried mainly by the state-owned media in the country resulting in the rapid decline of tolerance of political pluralism and views in the country. This was especially dangerous in a country already characterised by a high incidence of political violence. It was argued that hate speech provided an endorsement and justification of the mainly state-sponsored violence taking place and that legislative measures should be put in place to combat it.

The working group sessions of the conference were important as delegates articulated their views and aspirations of the AFMD. There was consensus on the mission of the AFMD **“to promote an active and effective forum for networking among organisations committed to media development in Africa”**. However, some views articulated in these groups may be unsuitable to the purpose of the AFMD. These views conceptualised the AFMD as a donor or benefactor that would provide the necessary financial resources to solve many of the ingrained problems that beset media development on the continent. A weakness in the view of the Coordinator was that delegates did not focus on how networking in Africa needed to be strategically harnessed in order to articulate these problems more clearly and to more effectively target forums and organisations that could make resources available to media support organisations. The AFMD came to be seen as an end to a problem, rather than as a means to addressing it. Nevertheless some useful and interesting proposals were made.

Recommendations on the mission and activities of the AFMD

- To work in partnership under a common voice in engaging donors and governments on media

development issues in Africa.

- The AFMD must develop founding documents to articulate rules about membership and values it subscribes to, including equity values
- An assessment must be made of how media development and support funds are currently being distributed in Africa, including to which sub-sectors of the media and sectors of media support organisations and assess whether the levels of support are adequate
- Harmonising information sharing in order to minimise duplication and to promote greater synchronisation of activities at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and to reduce conflict between organisations. In this respect a data base of organisations and their activities must be established, as well as on tools and best practises
- A code of conduct should be developed for media support organisations
- Enhancing networking and joint programming among organisations involved in media development
- Addressing management and governance problems in media support organisations
- National studies should be conducted on the ownership and control of media to assess the state of media pluralism and diversity
- Standards and guidelines must be set in respect of the salaries and wages of journalists
- Donors must not set the agendas of media support organisations - these organisations must be driven based on their own needs
- The recently established database of media education and training institutions in Africa can help to avoid duplication and more effectively harness resources in this sub-sector.
- A database of media trainers and consultants should be established, including their fees, as well as shared resources that could be available to media support organisations.

During the broadcasting session a delegate called on media support and freedom of expression organisations to critically assess their relevance and credibility as these were in some instances being questioned by the media. In the view of the Coordinator this observation is important. Some media support organisations enjoy little linkage or interaction with the media, and seem to exist for their own sake. The delegate also called on media support organisations to ensure they remained relevant by also focusing on new media and new converged means of communication.

These sentiments were echoed in a later session on ICT's and Citizen Journalism which emphasised that media which did not make the transition to new converged technologies were relegating themselves to history. One presenter said that new media technologies challenged the capacities and programmes of both the media and media support organisations. Even media support organisations should be considering whether they themselves needed to be converged. Citizen Journalism, if properly managed and supported, could influence deliberative democracy and participatory development and could contribute to the rise of news informed by a much broader diversity of perspectives. Young people who represented current and future media consumers were no longer willing to spend much time on consuming traditional forms of media, and were increasingly relying on much faster forms of media such as the Internet and mobile phones and technology which combined both of these with broadcasting. Journalism educators also had to be empowered to teach the practise of new media. Concerns were expressed by delegates about the increasing divide between the rich and the poor in Africa and that new technology, only affordable to some, was helping to increase this divide. Some scepticism was also expressed about whether multimedia technologies were appropriate as conveyors of information to the real life under-developed conditions in Africa.

It was noted that AMARC Africa had just completed participatory research to identify key barriers that limit the potential impact of community radio broadcasters. Major barriers included the lack of enabling legislation, the existence of media oppression and military threats. Financial and technical sustainability were also major barriers and distracted community radio practitioners from their efforts in radio production and the relevance of their programming. General capacity building was a major problem as well as enhancing local ownership of community radio stations. AMARC has developed extensive strategies to respond to these findings.

Attention was drawn to research currently being conducted by the AfriMAP division of the Open Society Foundations in respect of a Survey of state and public broadcasting in 12 African countries. The research was comprehensive and covered both law and practise in the media landscapes of these countries, the efficacy of the internal operations of these broadcasters (technical and human), their transmission capacities and footprints and comparison of the programming of state broadcasters and other commercial and community broadcasters. In addition an audience survey was being conducted in each country. This research was being conducted to assist advocacy initiatives for the transformation of state broadcasters into public broadcasters in these countries. The countries include Benin, Cameroon, Cape

Verde, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The research was most likely to be completed in mid 2009, but in some instances were already being supplied to media CSO's to support current campaigns. The SOS campaign in South Africa – "Save our SABC: Reclaiming the Public Broadcaster" was also mentioned as an example of a country which had initially made dramatic strides in establishing a non-partisan public broadcaster shortly after its democratisation in 1994, but which was now in real danger of backsliding into a party-political tool and government controlled broadcaster yet again.

Another key session involved the presentation of two case studies on the (independent self-regulatory) Press Councils of South African and Botswana. One of the serious media freedom struggles in Africa centres around the elimination of state-controlled media regulation in favour of self-regulation, as far the professional standards and content of the media are concerned. Both these councils are under attack in their countries by government or ruling party efforts to introduce statutory media councils. These presenters were not left unchallenged and a few delegates still called for a clear case to be made that that self-regulation would result in better media practise than state regulation.

The election proceedings and results of the two new African representatives on the GFMD's steering committee (Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX and Gabriel Baglo, the IFJ's Africa Regional Director) is covered in the minutes of the conference. Some initial debate was involved in this election as to the desirability and necessity of holding two separate elections – one for an Anglophone delegate and one for a Francophone delegate. A majority of the delegates, however, voted in favour of holding a dual election on these lines. It certainly does help to ensure that the Francophone countries will not be marginalised over the next three years and that communication will also take place in French. But the matter may again crop up for debate with the introduction of media support organisations from Lusophone countries in Africa, who may also want direct representation. At present however, the GFMD's draft rules provide for only two representatives from each regional forum on the steering committee of the GFMD, and it is unlikely to change these rules. Some of the other regions (for example Eurasia and Asia) are also characterised by big language diversities, and they have all agreed to the present GFMD regional steering committee structure.

AFMD conference media statement

An open letter drafted by the GFMD was approved for public release by the AFMD conference. The open letter from the GFMD and the AFMD was addressed to the European Union, the African Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (the High Forum), in relation to its Accra Agenda for Action conference, which was to take place a few days later in Ghana. This conference was being convened as a consultation between Europe and Africa to discuss general European development assistance to Africa. Although this conference was also going to include civil society representation, only one or two members of the AFMD conference were aware of this event. Representatives of some international media development organisations also said they had received very late invitations for this conference, and in the main were unable to attend. Nevertheless 3 delegates who would be attending (IFJ Africa, Panos West Africa and the BBC World Service Trust) were mandated to speak to the communiqué at the AAA conference, which was signed on a voluntary basis by most of the AFMD organisations present in Grahamstown.

The main message communicated was that: **"Governments, donors and policy makers need to recognise that media are intrinsic components of democratic development, rather than simply channels for advocacy and promotion of messages in support of development policy"** and that **"the AFMD is calling on governments and donors to create financial mechanisms for media development that are independent of undue political or government influence and to increase overall support to media in Africa"**.

AFMD website and post-conference networking

The Coordinator and MISA have also been working on preparing an AFMD information page on MISA's web site with the Coordinator supplying most of the content. The Coordinator believed it was more practical to simply create a page for the AFMD on MISA's web site rather than to create a dedicated AFMD web site at this stage. The AFMD page is almost complete and MISA's home page will make specific reference to this page. The AFMD page will also provide links to the GFMD's web site. The GFMD's website also contains a few documents from the AFMD conference, but not as extensively as the MISA/AFMD site will. In due course the GFMD is going to have to make formal decisions about the web sites of its regional forums and their linkage to the GFMD. Until these policies are made it is not wise to establish a separate web site for the AFMD, because it could amount to a waste of funds.

A second open letter and public statement has been released by the GFMD and AFMD in relation to the annual European Development Days conference of the European Commission which took place in Strasbourg from November 15 – 17. It is a clearer exposition of the concerns of the two organisations articulated in the first open letter to the EU, AU and OSCE⁵.

Arrangements for the organisation of delegates to attend the GFMD's Athens conference took a different course than originally envisaged.

The networking functions to select African delegates for the GFMD's conference was again coordinated by Jeanette Minnie by convening a sub-committee of key AFMD media support organisations in a side meeting held alongside a "Press Freedom in Africa" conference in Botswana organised by the Open Society Foundations in Africa and its international Media Programme in London on October 15 and 16. A sub-committee consisting of herself, Gabriel Baglo of the IFJ, Diana Senghor of Panos West Africa, Edetaen Ojo of Media Rights Agenda in Nigeria, David Makali of the East African Editors Forum and the Media Institute of Kenya as well as Kaitira Kandjii of MISA participated in this meeting. At this stage the GFMD Director had requested a list of 35 African delegates from the two African GFMD representatives, and the meeting was held to decide the criteria according to which they would be selected. The criteria included:

- Sub-regional representation
12 representatives would be selected from West Africa (60% Francophone and 40% Anglophone)
10 representatives would be selected from Southern Africa
8 representatives would be selected from East Africa
5 representatives would be selected from Central Africa.
- A gender quota of 30% women would be applied in the selection of delegates.
- Attempts should be made to include Lusophone delegates from the 5 Lusophone countries in Africa (two in Southern Africa, 2 in West in Africa and 1 in Central Africa).

The actual follow-up work to this meeting (contacting proposed delegates to check on their availability and to obtain their contact details for the GFMD) was undertaken by Gabriel Baglo of the IFJ and Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX, with Baglo taking responsibility for West and Central African and Minnie taking responsibility for Southern and Eastern Africa. Minnie was assisted by MISA and the Media Institute of Kenya in this regard.

The GFMD has been in the process of extending these invitations to delegates.

During the course of this process the target of including Lusophone delegates from 5 countries was not met because no media support organisations could be identified in 3 of these countries. In the case of Southern African delegates from Angola and Mozambique are confirmed to attend. The GFMD has been forwarded the names of individual media practitioners in the outstanding Lusophone countries for consideration. The gender quota of 30% is likely to be met, and may perhaps even be exceeded.

During the Open Society conference in Botswana Jeanette Minnie also arranged a special information session on the AFMD for the approximately 15 African media support organisations who attended this event. The meeting took place early on the second morning before the actual commencement of the Open Society programme for that day. Gabriel Baglo and Jeanette Minnie facilitated the discussion and the main focus was on the working group recommendations made at the AFMD conference. Edetaen Ojo of Media Rights Agenda noted that some of the recommendations were too generalised and unsuitable to the mission of the GFMD. He cautioned that it was essential for the AFMD to focus on its core purpose of strengthening calls and coordination for more financial and more consistent support of media development organisations and efforts in Africa. The observation was well made and has been noted.

Conclusion

In conclusion some modest but concrete gains have been made in the establishment of the AFMD through a series of three events: the preparatory meeting in Maputo; the AFMD founding conference and the AFMD sub-committee and information meetings in Botswana. At least 60 African media support organisations have been involved in this early phase of establishing the AFMD. In addition, a number of organisations not previously involved in the AFMD have also been included among those to attend the

⁵ See second open letter attached

Athens global conference, to expand the network further. The AFMD page on MISA's web site will also be publicised in Africa and internationally in the near future, including to all the organisations above. In addition, the AFMD has issued two communiqués to the EU and AU and these were also issued as media statements.

The GFMD's conference in Athens will present the next opportunity (during the two AFMD/regional forum sessions on the programme), to take the development of the AFMD a step further. Some projects and networking development activities will have to be formulated based on a careful selection of the AFMD working group recommendations, and further discussion about the role and purpose of the forum. It is hoped that the Athens conference of the GFMD will provide a fertile background to focus the minds of AFMD members on relevant and strategic networking activities. After that a fundraising round will have to be conducted again, primarily led by the two African GFMD steering committee members. In essence, however, the work towards establishing a more coherent and coordinated community of practise among media development organisations in Africa has begun.